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### Interview with Manuel Manahan

Cecil B. Currey

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Side 1 - Interview with Manuel Manahan, 27 Pilar St., San Juan, Manila,  
Republic of the Philippines - 24 July 1985 - page 1

M: ...books. I have got one of Portrait of an <sup>Cold</sup> ~~Old~~ (??) Warrior.

C: I haven't read that, but I am going to read it this evening.

M: What I am telling you is different...a decade has passed. Relations of people have worked together, school together, fought together, and then the cut off.(?). In the United States, from the American point of view, the thing that is different is that this movement, the progress of events, at the cut off point that mean we are no longer friends because I am independent and you are not independent; we are no longer friends. No, it's not that, hunh? From the American point of view, I happen to think ...on the other hand, from the Filipino point of view ...Independence is (unintelligible) and yet that feeling is from the Americans. It is one of great sentimentality, which I perhaps, it may be ~~the~~ Spanish trait, left by the Spanish culture, or it may be a Malayan trait. I don't know exactly. Or it could be the complete by ...the two cultures, our own Malayan culture and over 400 years of Spanish culture...

(background conversation - unintelligible)

M: ...but the center mentality. The Filipinos ...independent, but they feel \_\_\_\_\_ by the father image of America. And they forget such things, for example, you know, when the war started and we didn't know what was going to happen, an entirely new experience; and then the voice of freedom (unintelligible) ...do not despair. There is a great amount of boats now proceeding toward the Philippines. Lots of boats, hunh?

C: They never showed up.

M: Hunh?

C: Not in 1942.

M: I am talking about 1941...rescue, etc, etc. And the Filipinos kept on



M: fighting. You mean there were no boats, huhn? (Laughter) They  
*They didn't mind that. ... came out & said how the Philippines will be rebuilt.*  
kept on. Then the (unintelligible) I remember the first conference with  
General Eisenhower held here after the victory of Europe, and he came over. *the liberation.*  
I asked him that question, General, how do you compare the destruction of  
Manila to the cities in Europe? What would you consider? He said, the only  
comparable thing is Warsaw, which was really...

C: Rubble.

M: And that made the headlines of the world, that question that I brought  
up. And that's how Manila was. We don't exaggerate. (unintelligible)...  
because it was not only Manila it was (names cities, unintelligible)...from  
one city to another. In all Asia, among all Southeast Asian countries, it  
was only the Filipinos who fought and assisted together with the Americans,  
then the conquest by Japan continued throughout. Irrespective of promises  
or not, irrespective of the lack of weapons. There was that growing army  
of guerrillas. Eventually the liberation came on. So you would think that  
a Filipino in that respect would be a very impractical man but they told them  
to walk through the lines, they did as if it didn't matter. Etc., etc.

*The cities were partially rebuilt.*  
A lot of shenanigans went into it, both in/connections and reparations, they  
were the ones in front, and many who didn't have the voice *or didn't know who to approach.* (unintelligible).  
whether  
So I don't know *which* this things could have been a country without \_\_\_\_\_

But no, I don't say this, because even when many guerrillas were not recognized,  
some for very good reason because there were those who project that they were  
guerrillas when they were actually collaborators with the Japanese. ..the  
Jap, there were some enemies. But always...we can always get something from  
America. America would not even if they had given us independence and not let  
us alone. We are hanged on with the sentimentality, that trait of sentimentality.



M: *Americans, obligations ... etc.*

something like that, hunh? Now when you think about what has happened, I think Ed foresaw then that he came in <sup>in</sup> a period when there was still a great wealth of feeling between Americans and Filipinos. And he made great use of this. He was very smart in understanding this. So he came in and mixed with all elements that he could possibly mix.

You know, in the point of view, those who were caught, among those who should have been caught rather, were two who were befriended by Ed. Cid Chiciano/(sp?)...I don't know if you remember, he was a newspaper writer for the Bulletin...

C: What was his last name?

M: Cid. C I D Like El Cid, hunh?...and Joe Langsang (sp?), another one of the friends.

Public Bureau ??  
But when they did get the Politburo (???) they didn't pick up this, too, and they let go Reynaldo Constantino (sp?), who was married to the niece of President Rojas... (sp?)

(background conversation...unintelligible)

M: ...who keeps on writing books. He just whips them out. At that period of time, he was -he didn't measure up to- the Lava ?? Brothers, who were called, etc., etc. They didn't ~~measure up~~ *measure up*.

Anyway, the methods that were used during that time were armed, military might. And cleansing the Army, disciplining it, making it as effective as possible. And the other method of the velvet glove. You see the other arm, two methods of ...farmlands for those who surrendered, who gave up. The all-out



M: fight against the injustices of \_\_\_\_\_. All of these things eventually worked out very well. The point that when Nino Aquino (sp?) came with me to effect the surrender of the Huks of Fermo (phonetic?), Luis Taruc. Luis Taruc told us, I no longer have any reason to keep on fighting because the things for which I have been fighting for are now being done. I told him to come to Murphy(?), deliver him to the Chief of Staff, General Ching Baldaya (phonetic). Finished. When he surrendered, one after another surrendered. The whole movement, the whole uprising which had lasted a period of over nine years finished. The Politburo or the confirmed Communists were and nothing they could do about it in jail, excepting for these three. Somehow clemency(?) but I say that they were good friends of Ed's. They were also very good friends of Ramon Magsaysay, because Ramon Magsaysay helped them out. I always wondered, I never asked him, I never asked the President why. Personally, I liked them too, myself. Chiciano (sp?) Cid...you must have met him?

(background voice--unintelligible)

M: Very, very nice.

C: Could you tell me how you met Ed Lansdale?

M: Ed was precisely...<sup>hooking(?)</sup> he came up with everybody. In one point <sup>was</sup> he always watched, made it a point to be in, /what, the newly emerging fresh crop. This previous to that was at the Elena (sp?) Apartments, at one time. And /...I don't recall, he was somewhere else before that but eventually, what I remember is Elena Apartments. Well, and that's where they sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ (laughter). He was very well liked, accepted by all of those who went there.

C: Peter Richards describes Lansdale as an invisible man. He said that he was always around, yet attention was very rarely focused on him.

M: On Peter?

C: No, Peter said this about Ed Lansdale: that Lansdale was invisible.



C: That he might go out with Ramon Magsaysay into the countryside. People would come up and talk with Magsaysay and Ed was there but he was kind of in the background. How would you react to that?

M: Well, in a way, yes. In a way, yes. He would have, as you would say, in the case of a personality growing (?) up and trying to be that... that is true. That's true.

Actually <sup>very rare</sup> many are the pictures where we were together. And he always wanted to take pictures. As a matter of fact, when I am in one, he disappeared, completely in the background. And that was about the time we went to \_\_\_\_\_. Completely out, and yet people believed that he was in, somewhere around (Laughter). Exactly that. But I can swear it, and I would know. If anybody would know, it would be me.

I have been linked so much with Ed actually, that's the reason why <sup>have</sup> in, when those who've written against the Americans, come up with stories about Ed, they write ~~that~~, unfortunately, against the small group...small group that we had formed, all helping the late President.

C: Were you aware that Ed Lansdale when he was here working with Magsaysay, that he was more than just an Air Force officer?  
fellow??

M: He certainly was not a "feather merchant"?? as he called himself, because he was with the JUSMAAG. He was with the JUSMAAG, and he stayed in their compound.

C: Technically he was with them but not of them.

M: No. Yes. Who's that?

C: Ed Lansdale was technically with JUSMAAG but was not of JUSMAAG.

M: JUSMAAG, that is correct, that would be. Yes, because they would have all sorts of people going in, which I am sure the professional JUSMAAG



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M: wouldn't approve. (Laughter)

DOROTHY BOHANNAN IN BACKGROUND: Well, let's get one thing straight. My husband was U.S. Army, Ed was U.S. Air Force. You cannot be with the U.S. Air Force and retire from it and be CIA.

C: Oh, I don't believe Ed was...he was never CIA...

B: No.

M: He never was.

C: He was posted to them upon occasion; worked for them; but he was not of them.

B: You cooperate when you are both working on the same thing.

And the CIA needed...

M: He was Office of Strategic Services, I think, something like that.

C: He started with OSS.

M: In World War II, he was OSS. That I knew.

C: But only for a year; only for a year...he then transferred to Army Intelligence and finished out the war as a member of Army Intelligence.

M: He definitely was in Intelligence. But the CIA did not exist at that time.

C: That's right.

M: ...the whole CIA skeleton was so...

C: He was actually a member of a thing called OPC. The Office of Policy Coordination. There was a joint Defense/State Department Intelligence operation.

B: ...CIA, the things you do. My husband...(Unintelligible). You know, the CIA was State Department and people who quit the Army weren't CIA (???) (unintelligible) they had to retire from the State Department. And to say that Ed was, you know, (unintelligible) cooperate...



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M: Well, actually CIA started operating...when did the CIA start operating?

C: 1949.

M: 1949.

C: And before that there was a kind of a forerunner of it called OSO -  
the Office of Special Operations. In 1949 it became CIA.

M: He was not even OSS?

C: Not by the time he got here, no.

M: No, no---CIA... CIA was not an offshoot of OSS?

C: Well, yes and no. MATERIAL ABOUT WILD BILL DONOVAN, ETC. OMITTED.

C: Would you tell me what you know about NAMFREL?

M: About NAMFREL?

C: Yes.

M: Well, there was this character, Gabriel Kaplan, he started  
community centers, the idea of development of villages, helping develop them,  
the villages, so they in turn would develop socially and economically. So



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M: we were, one way or another, related, because in my own particular  
Gimeal??  
interest I helped out a newspaperman then Jimiel (phonetic?) who worked  
at the, his own program of rural development in China; eventually he  
translated it into what became the Taiwan movement, the construction movement  
and was one of the first regional commissioners; he was able to inspire  
Truman through the help of General Marshall to pass a law creating the Taiwan  
Bureau of Construction Movement. That was implemented, it was, I don't think  
it was called the Taiwan Rural TRL (?) originally, because they started  
operations in China mainland, and it was still in the province of Pinching sp?  
\_\_\_\_\_ so it was established actually in Taiwan. Basically  
it was intended to be mainland. Anyway I went...I was interested in Gimeal (sp?)  
...you know Gimeal?

Background: Uhn hunh.

M: And as a matter of fact, I still sup with him. We celebrated the  
33rd anniversary of the Philippine Bureau of Reconstruction Movement last  
Saturday. That's where I worked, for Spanish for happiness (Laughter). Very  
interesting work. And it's always attracted me. Gabriel, on the other hand,  
\_\_\_\_\_ (names--? Tony \_\_\_\_\_ and various  
others to work with him on this community center; one in \_\_\_\_\_, one  
in \_\_\_\_\_, and then when all of a sudden, the whole community center  
was practically dropped like a hot potato. Not because it was a hot potato,  
but because all focus was in the starting of the national movement for free  
elections. NAMFREL. So Jaimie (?)...the community centers was left to  
\_\_\_\_\_ and to Tony \_\_\_\_\_. Then Jaimie together with Mrs. Balboa, Tina Lopes (sp?)--  
Tina pulled me in, I was the publisher of a dialect newspaper of the Filipino



M: newspaper and the Manila Times published \_\_\_\_\_  
we all got together and that started Namfrel going. And it operated...1954.  
1953 and 1954.

C: Do you think it was effective?

M: Yes, certainly, it did help very much. There were so many things  
that were being done at that time in conjunction, some independent of others,  
all directed toward the same effort of helping <sup>to</sup> elect President...to the  
Presidency. Magsaysay.

DOGS BARKING--INTERRUPTION

C: One Filipino said to me recently, Senator, that Ed Lansdale was  
really responsible for Ramon Magsaysay becoming President; said Magsaysay could  
never have done it on his own. Would you react to that?

M: I would qualify it in the sense that Ed Lansdale was perceptive  
enough, so perceptive, that he realized that Ramon Magsaysay was a man who  
had great qualities of leadership. He was very raw in many ways, but definitely  
a man of action, a man who was sensitive to understanding the situation of  
people, especially in our country at that time. He was ultra sensitive, as a  
matter of fact, relating to the situation of the little man, for the small man.  
But in time, many of us who are gifted, have a lot, a good education, just  
look at the servants or the farmers planting rice, like the Mandarins look  
at the coolies in China many years ago. They never saw the potentials, of  
what human beings these people, that we ourselves could rise up these people.  
Certainly could. But God certainly has not given the monopoly of being a genius  
to those of us that graduated from universities or got scholar gifts, hunh?



M: Certainly Magsaysay was not equipped with so many of the gracious things of education, or the ungracious things of education. But he had a great perception of the feelings of the people, and it was so expressed in things, you know...I could claim, although I don't, although I don't boast about it, I could claim to be one of those closest to Ramon Magsaysay. But yet there are things that I don't know the origin of, and I don't know whether Ed had a hand in this, one way or the other. Frankly...take this for example: when he became president he came out with certain things which I would call that those who have less in life should have more, you know. Now, how did this come about? In the first month of his administration as President, he was invited to see ...to visit the Province of Batava sp?? an island (?) Province, and being a most popular man that he was, walking him around, banqueting him, etc. etc., showed him the best that they have, before he got to leave, he went up to the municipality--provincial capital of--he went up and saw the offices and when he went down, he was going down the stairs, you know, he looked back and said there was a jail there, and the people came out, told ...he went back to the jail and asked the people, why are you in jail? They said, we were caught because we were clearing forest land, which is prohibited. But they wanted land. They wanted land to till. And they were caught...forestry...their ambition. So several months already, the case was still waiting for...to be called, etc. etc. etc. So he asked for the key, open the gate, and you may go. And he said to them, should those who have less in life ~~must~~ have more in law. We must recognize that our people need land and we must do everything possible to give them land. And not jail them for being down here (??). There was an uproar in







M: An apt - A P T.

He was not, as others claimed to be, luminaries in this particular degree in college. No. He laughingly stated he was just a mechanic, called \_\_\_\_\_ a style of engineering. He liked to think of it that way.

Ed.

I was the sons of Pancho for/ If you know that Spanish moral of Don Quixote. I was the sons of Pancho, of Ed. Do you know, come to think of it, when you say that even \_\_\_\_\_, who Somehow he would tell that so many of us/were sons of Pancho, who were present to help the President: Jaimie Ferrar, John San Juan, Frisco San Juan; all of us, the ones who kept...we went in the country. We had very, very special teams. Johnny San Juan, Frisco San Juan; of course they are banished (?) now. We went out into the provinces before the President to see that all the information about each province, all the political intelligence. We would then sift this, the more vital to present to the President. \_\_\_\_\_ for this. Jaimie and Frisco and I. My job was to remain with the President, with the candidate/all the time.

There are things, frankly, I can't tell you, because of this situation.

C: Do you want me to turn it off for awhile?

PAUSE

M: That shouldn't be mentioned. But when I...I tried. Admitted.... unintelligible

C: Most humans do.

M: Yes, humans do. Anybody...

C: Except you and me.

M: No, no, no, no. Except those who are presumptuous to think they can be God. (Laughter)



M: You know...We go to one town, he would speak. We give the  
You would  
information that upset them. ~~You~~ see what particular phrase, particular  
paragraph, made a hit; that thing we kept in the speech. Next town, we  
would evolve something else; just one sentence. Another town, another  
sentence. Another town, another sentence. After 20 towns, it was like  
a puzzle. (Laughter) That was my chore, in the background; like Ed did,  
in the background. Through us. Unfortunately we would always make...

C: You know, that's just bullshit, you know, really.

M: No, no, the point is, it is being used now. You have to know the  
importance of this.

C: Sir, do you know the American, Benjamin Franklin? A nearly founding  
father of the United States.

M: I know.

C: Ok. He once said, mud is dirt, but when you throw it against  
polished marble, it won't stick...So he throws this sort of thing and  
mentions your name...

M: No, it's not this. It's the one they are writing ...Constantino...

C: Yeah, I read it.

M: But are used as textbooks now for all children. But they make this  
...well, anyway, let me proceed with this. That was our past, hunh? Which  
we are proud of. And in effect I come to think of it, now that we are  
discussing this, I seem to think that Ed was using all of us, directing  
his \_\_\_\_\_, general \_\_\_\_\_. Now, why did we do it? Why,  
because, I repeat, his perceptions so that this man would be a good leader,  
and he was. That this man would draw attention to one \_\_\_\_\_ thing



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M: which were sensualists (?), have been the love of the Filipino people. But they still have \_\_\_\_\_. And which today, even today, when we have wasted billions and billions and have bartered (?) billions and billions and claim to have constructed thousands of roads in concrete and thousands of bridges and hundreds of federal electric plants and what not, we had a \_\_\_\_\_ there. The realities are that they are lying to our people. I saw '83, which is the latest figure, year '83, which was the year before our \_\_\_\_\_ year '84. You probably...let me say this first, just to show you. '76 the poverty line was 6,150 pesos. (unintelligible) 6,150 pesos a year, poverty line. And at that time 62.5 per cent of total population is poverty line and below. In '83, the poverty line was 7,100. 79.5 per cent of our population lived in the poverty line. Nearly 80 per cent of our people. \_\_\_\_\_ object at that point that those who have less in life, should have more in law. It means we got to.

END OF SIDE 1

SIDE 2 -

draw?

M: ...as she will grow, I would like to think that she will finish the portrait of Ed Lansdale. You are also drawing the background, or in the foreground, about what Mr. Magsaysay wanted, that those who had less in life...

C: What made Ramon Magsaysay special like that? Why did he feel these things and other politicians of his time or perhaps later did not? What had happened to him, Senator?

M: You know, I knew him as a Congressman, who was go, go on veterans affairs at the time \_\_\_\_\_. You know the thing about



M:        against Magsaysay that he was the monster, (Laughter) Frankenstein, that Lansdale made something along that line, but the real truth is, I have not seen him yet at that period of time in history, neither did many. Although I could remember him as being a cold, cold man, but when it really hit us \_\_\_\_\_, when he became Defense Secretary, it was an act of strength. When it is like teaching, for Ed it was not physical job, it was \_\_\_\_\_ the right material, the man who--in fact, had a feeling for music, \_\_\_\_\_ play. It was only a question of teaching you what to do first and what not.

C:        That's a good illustration. I like that.

M:        That is the point. And when \_\_\_\_\_, it all came out. And it was a great, such feeling of faith (?). He was not a fake, and Ed saw this. Ed saw this. He was not \_\_\_\_\_, just a show off, hunh? And then later on, when the crowd \_\_\_\_\_, well, the son of a bitches, something like that, no?

          You have to write the books (Laughter).

C:        Well, I am going to. Someone suggested to me the other day that it was good for Ramon Magsaysay's reputation that he died when he did. Would you have a comment on that? What he said was that as an administrator, Magsaysay was not all that good, and that certain of the programs that he wanted to achieve, he didn't know how really to administer into reality.

M:        All right. I would like to \_\_\_\_\_ to a certain extent. (Dogs barking--hard to understand)..to a certain extent. But when you make your corporate direction; let's say we are a corporation, what should we all know? We first need the savvy of the conditions, pros and cons whether things are favorable to us, what are our biggest problems that we have to surmount,



Side 2 - Interview with Manuel Manahan, 27 Pilar St., San Juan, Manila,  
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M: the biggest problems we have...when 79.5 per cent of our population live in poverty. Where do we all stand? What is to be the best administrator in legal? Now he asked for people and there was some response  
(loud noise blocking out speaker)...that was the biggest problem, that he saw. You know that I was scared like hell (?), about the best situation  
(his voice drops to a whisper)

C: But people tell me Senator that there are very few rebels: 12,000...

M: Bullshit (very loudly)

C: 12,000 is the biggest figure I have seen.

M: ...in a fighting force there are not enough guns, there are not enough guns.

C: I was told just yesterday that the Filipinos will not revolt.

M: You know I have always been interested in this. My last year as a Senator, I was a delegate to the International Monetary Fund. I had ~~as~~ one of my committees was chairmans of the banks franchises, so I was entitled to go to Buenos Aires. And I arranged it so that I would visit the United States. I went to Mexico on the way down etc, etc. One country after another. I know Spanish. It was easy for me to understand and to mix with the people.

C: They probably thought you were Spanish.

M: Yes, and inside my head, how you say, as a Filipino what is the difference between a Latin American from the point of view that these people are so volatile in revolution. We are not.

C: You are not.

M: We are so passive. And yet you/say that we are cowards, because



M: what is this, we have proved it....Corrigidor and the rest of the world (very loudly).

C: Maybe you are just being wise, because with all of the volatility of Central and South America...

M: no, other countries have done it...

C: ...their poverty level is still huge.

M: Yes.

C: All of the revolutions haven't helped them yet.

M: We are the same Spanish culture; we are even more. We are related to \_\_\_\_\_ in 1870, 1815 (1850??). We carried on until 1897. The Spanish culture, the Catholic religion, 50 years of learning democracy. That is the way; that is the way \_\_\_\_\_. 50 years. Another way was taught?? taught?? But Americans tried to, Vietnamese, when bullets were flying over their head, learn democracy this way. We learned it the right way. And we believed in your heroes, because unfortunately when we declared general education, education was framed in the American system. I know more about how Washington chopped the cherry tree and things like that.

C: Then you know about Amelio...

M: ...and about Resall (??) and a story about the moth and the lamp.

We got European history. We studied the same history that you studied \_\_\_\_\_, but we got oriental history about the countries in the Orient. And I was third year ?), and it was mimeographed. I still remember that. I went to a Jesuit school in Manila. It was \_\_\_\_\_. That was our first entry to learning that even before the Spanish and all the rest, there was \_\_\_\_\_ an occupied kingdom, that ruled the rest. But of that I was completely ignorant. Very complicated. So we knew more about your



M: heroes. And frankly from Ed I learned about Tom Paine. You know, reading about what Tom Paine said, I think that if Tom Paine were alive 10 years ago, 20 years ago, he would be an American Communist...

C: At least in the '50's, under the McCarthy Act...

M: Yes, he would have been an American Communist.

C: In the 1950's, Senator, a reporter for the Denver Post took a copy of our Declaration of Independence out on the street. He asked people to sign it ...refused (MATERIAL OMITTED)

M: Now, we have been learning about Tom Paine, more about Tom Paine, We have been learning what was the real history of how the Americans got the Philippines. We never knew that history. And those who write, who learn, who study most of this \_\_\_\_\_ and all \_\_\_\_\_.

C: Why are you so frightened now?

M: Not frightened.

C: Worried, concerned.

M: Worried. Because my point now is worried because ...you know, I am a man who has climbed mountains, looked for what I felt should be looked into. I no longer can. But all this builds up pressures on me, knowing what is administration ???, and knowing how our youth are being deluded. Number two, that is from our \_\_\_\_\_, number two. You Americans lead us, have no perception about what is going on here. And you have \_\_\_\_\_ coming out here; everything is hunky dory. Damn it. (Loudly) Throw out the U.S. Senator, Congress; would Washington be all right. Bullshit.

C: From my papers, all I see is ...concerning Marcos...take Pearl Harbor (Material omitted)

M: That is the least now. That is the least now. They are not \_\_\_\_\_.

But you know, your blessings that you can count is the fact that even during



M: the time of McKinley, when McKinley, Congress decided to go and  
get \_\_\_\_\_, he only did by one vote. That's, you see, why \_\_\_\_\_  
on which to build;  
We don't even have the structure/ that has been destroyed and yet your  
vice president ?? \_\_\_\_\_

...know what the situation is. Even people who live in the south ??, they  
don't want to learn civic or \_\_\_\_\_, knowing especially, us who know  
more, something more than the organizers, knowing that you have things that  
you have revered, not only in Diego ?? but in Saipan ??, that you have  
we??  
alternatives left to you; you are not that dumb. And if the Filipino  
were to \_\_\_\_\_ too much \_\_\_\_\_ bullshit.

C: What should be done here?

M: That is the main concern of the... \_\_\_\_\_  
that should be a concern. Your concern should be, you have got to try to  
think of Filipinos they should survive. They should not be overwhelmed.  
Not by a dictator and eventually a Communist takeover. It will come.

C: What could the United States do?

M: I don't know. It would seem like a joke, 10 Ed Lansdales (Laughter).  
But then you have to have some...it's not entirely a joke if you could send  
men who have influence, who have great perception, that same great perception  
that Ed Lansdale.

C: Well, I think sometimes, Mr. Manahan, that if we built one less  
Trident submarine, we could take all of your homeless that I see here in  
Manila and build them a house like this... (MATERIAL OMITTED)  
exclusive??

M: But it is not inclusive ?? that you know. It is to be able to  
restore, insure...you know, when Mr. Marcos took away the democratic system,



M: eliminating Congress, I saw that he was able to do this, why?

Because people were fed up by the character and the kind of leadership that both the Senate and Congress have. I was glad to see that??, but I would not \_\_\_\_\_ because there were good men also, and good men could with liberty ??, without being frightened...those were the feelings of the people even if they were not a majority. They could free \_\_\_\_\_. You cannot do without conventions allowing \_\_\_\_\_ and all this \_\_\_\_\_ presidency just to \_\_\_\_\_ it from all of you.

C: I don't know where we would find a dozen Lansdales.

M: No, no, it has to be on our own; on our own. It has to be on our own.

C: \_\_\_\_\_ wants to come back and help.

M: It would take many, many. If only everybody would only forget about their own personal ambitions and just \_\_\_\_\_. Frankly, even to us, American help is anathama at this point in time.

C: Probably to ask, but if the help were given without being asked, I would hope you wouldn't turn it down.

M: That is possible. That is possible and pragmatic \_\_\_\_\_ direct \_\_\_\_\_. But to ask, no. Never.

C: What would happen if my President...

M: It is no longer a time of \_\_\_\_\_.

C: I know.

M: You know, actually, when there was talk that Magsaysay was helped with American money...my God, he should be helped more (Laughter). You say that now, Santa Maria ??, As I was saying...I was reading...you know, I'm reading up about revolutions. I was reading about the terror in Paris and



M: the discussion about \_\_\_\_\_ and I think I like the statement there.

C: Yeah, it's over here about \_\_\_\_\_ too.

(Laughter)

M: With helping, working together, helping, it was impressionable, \_?  
the writing. It came with the temper of the times. But we have come  
fighting, fighters, in combat now. We are fighters for democracy.

C: But how about Carino? Why didn't you just help in strengthening  
Carino?

M: He wasn't \_\_\_\_\_; he was surrounded. Carino, I found out later, was  
a very vain man, but he was a vain man who surrounded himself with evil men,  
unfortunately. People who said, what are we in power for, except to lace  
our pockets, particularly that; and they did.

That's why Magsaysay came in a very refreshing...

C: Well, let me ask you a question about Lansdale directly. What was  
it about him...let me put it this way: a man said to me yesterday, Lansdale  
was my hero. He said, he still is. What was there about Ed Lansdale that  
made people feel that way?

M: Number one, besides being a very nice personality, he had a feeling  
for your own personal thinking and objectives. And he worried himself,  
trying to find out solutions; not to entirely do it for you, but helping  
you do it yourself. In other words, little voice, /big ??man. ...not entirely  
works, but he became better man. You know, there were some things, for  
example, in the portrayal, whatever...

C: In the Midst of Wars.

M: In the Midst of Wars ...when the free Filipines was pulled out and  
thousands...everybody knew it was me (Laughter). Now they \_\_\_\_\_.

Everything, all of this, was with CIA money. At the time we were doing it,



M: \_\_\_\_\_ accomplished (Laughter). Oh, son of a bitch.

That's why when that thing--frankly, one of my friends was very much concerned, especially because Joe Smith's book--because the CIA is even a dirty name in the United States. (Laughter) It's something that the Americans have won over the Russians because the KGB isn't that ... (Laughter) and if you look into the realism, the KGB is a real son of a bitches.

What worries me is the present situation. How can we fare, ourselves? Especially when the American leaders are playing footsie.

C: Are you ready for me to shift the subject? Can I ask you a question on a different subject?

M: Surely.

C: Do you remember the Eastern Construction Company?

M: Yes, yes.

C: Could you tell me about it?

M: Yes, that was an actual creation of Ed and Bo. Someway to be able to--an opening to bring in our boys into Vietnam and see if they could be professors in the bunkers in their own way. Not because they were mechanics alone, but good carpenters, good construction people, or ...and the community development experts. They went all over Laos. I met them in Laos. I went to Vietnam about 8 or 9 times; that's why I pitied in the country; it was a pitiful thing. I used to stay with them in Chalong (sp?)--Chalong?

C: That's the Chinese section.

M: Yes, the Chinese section. It used to be the safest place during riots. (Laughter).

Frisco's in one--they call him Frisco--I call him Johnny.

C: He was the head of Eastern?

M: Yes, he was the head.



C: Started out as Freedom Company.

M: Freedom Company. It was incorporated as Freedom Company. Later on changed to Eastern.

C: Why the change of names? It seems like Freedom Company is better than Eastern Construction.

M: Well, you must realize that you were the focus of the interest of all the world in Vietnam. \_\_\_\_\_ in the early days times, during that time they had only about 10,000 Americans in the whole of Vietnam. <sup>Some of them were</sup> / special like Rangers, you know, and they send them two to a hamlet. So few Americans at that time. Of course, I would make correspondence and sit along the avenues, the sidewalks, drinking coffee and brandy...go to a certain place when there was news. I saw Vietnam that way \_\_\_\_\_ You have every kind of corresponding, during that time and period...you know, in a way, talking about Ed. I don't know, Ed, maybe he was trying to see if he could \_\_\_\_\_ with Ngo Dinh Diem. I knew Ngo Dinh Diem, I went in and talked to him, but the circumstances were different then; the circumstances were different. My interpretation, oasta? man, I don't claim to be an expert, I did visit Vietnam quite a number of times, went all over \_\_\_\_\_ country, up to the borders of Cambodia and what not, Play\_\_ (?) I remember. And my perception of Vietnam is...Ed in a way was right in picking Diem, wanting Diem. In this he was right. Why do I say this? ...administration...Philippines, in the Philippines we didn't have the \_\_\_\_\_; we were not a people driven from the north of Luzon to the south of Luzon..

INTERRUPTION--TELEPHONE CALL FOR MANAHAN

CONTINUING:

M: The whole of South Vietnan was composed of people who had been uprooted. They had not yet gotten together. Number two, in the selection of Ngo Dinh Diem,



M: they had the best man possible at that particular time and place. Why do I say this? I made a comparative study of colonizing methods: the Americans, the British, the French and the Dutch. The British claimed the best <sup>servants</sup> civil/ in the world. The best. The Americans tried to in the Philippines; they try to, but the British trained them. But the Civil Service was out to assist and direct them of the Bureau in general, of the Malayan. The Bureau of the white man, the British. But the Americans surpassed them. They trained them as a group, the British, but the director was a Filipino. Not only the director, the secretary of the department was a cabinet member and up to the point of the commonwealth government the president and vice-president inclusive. All the way through, complete. So the Filipinos had the best, regardless of what they may say, had the best opportunity of a country, had leaders that could. Of the atmosphere; everything. The Dutch trained up a certain extent only, but so many of them did not know. The French were the worst in training civil servants. Only the Vietnamese who had the money to go to France and study knew, and there were very few. Ngo Dinh Diem was one of the few. One of the few. What happened? You have the Buddhists burning themselves. There must be change. And some got experience, well, it's time. The generals appear to be the best leaders. True for pressing a, but not for leading a country. Two entirely different playgrounds.

C: Confucionism has a saying, that if a man is untalented, he can always become a soldier.

M: (Laughter) Well, that's what happened. I remember, I met the General, second military area of Pleicu. He was really third Prime Minister after poor Diem was gunned down. That was stupid; that was where the Americans lost Vietnam.

C: Yes.

M: We got leaders who could help, many who were good leaders. I don't



M: exaggerate.

C: Lansdale says his big disappointment was that when Diem was killed, the Vice President wasn't allowed to become President. He said if it had worked that way, then democracy might have had a chance.

M: Perhaps so. Perhaps so. \_\_\_\_\_ know that hunh? I only knew as far as Ngo Dinh Diem, and I met Can (sp?) later. Even sent one of our men through the Eastern Company who helped him set up the same office we had, which was the idea of Ed: the Presidential Complaints and Actions Commission. You know, we were cruising back to Manila Bay from "San Bolis", to go someplace, and when we were entering Manila Bay, they flashed the news: President Caren (sp?) had conceded the election. I think, we were there, and the President drew up the first executive order creating the Office of the Presidential Complaints and Action Commission. And he told me...I had just congratulated him, the President-elect, and I thought, now I can go back to my newspaper work. I have abandoned it for over a year. He said, no, we have just started working. You can't leave. That's how I got stuck. Until I resigned later on when I was commissioner of customs (?). Well, anyway, I say that the office was created to comply with the promise he made to the people all over. In all the villages he said, if you need my help, see me in Manila. Now, you know, it's impossible for the President to see (Laughter) ...so we had to set up this office that would be able to...so only these special cases, sifting, we would send the meritorious ones up. If you need my help immediately, send a telegram. A telegram at that time cost one peso for ten words. A telegram will now cost ten centavos and you can write 100 or 200 words. (Laughter) It became the famous "complaint telegram".

Let me tell you how we got Taruc. Magsaysay spoke the State of the Nation address the first month, the last week of the first month. Two days



M: later, Taruc, whom I knew--I interviewed him when I was a newspaperman--told me /I liked the President's speech. I would like to know if he is sincere. Can you come up and discuss this matter with me? So in the line of making these preparations, after telling the President and the President telling me, go ahead, go--while we were preparing Nino Aquino (sp?) \_\_\_\_\_ war correspondent in Korea stumbled on my courier, the courier that Taruc had been sending to me, so I had to put him in the \_\_\_\_\_ and don't write any story, you get \_\_\_\_\_. Well, we saw Taruc, who told us everything; the President analyzed it just as I told you: what makes a man willing to sacrifice his life. So all out on tenancy (?) \_\_\_\_\_. When we \_\_\_\_\_ this, a telegram came which said: "Dear Mr. President, I have been beaten up by my landlord because of differences in the \_\_\_\_\_. Please help me." All of this I am telling you, you know, it is branded in my brain, in my memory. So we send the usual SOP (?), provincial commander and see and investigate and report immediately. This was in the evening. And every morning I had to report to the President, 6 o'clock in the morning (Laughter), and I happened to have that telegram among the papers, and he said, what have you done? I sent wire to the commander. He said, send another wire, I want to know immediately. I did. At 8 o'clock the phone rang; said, Manny, come to the presidential yacht immediately. It was tied in the harbor. We went over there, walked on; he said, have you got any message yet from that...? Not yet. ...he was mixing with the people there; he threw his papers and he walked out. We went in his car...we went on the way (unintelligible--laughing)

DROPPED MICROPHONE--PAUSE ON TAPE

M: ...the Americans \_\_\_\_\_ and naturally the people, for the presidential \_\_\_\_\_ car. Magsaysay came down \_\_\_\_\_ and received this. Where is this man, the people there can't believe it. \_\_\_\_\_ They can believe; brought us to where he was lying down.



M: And the man told his story. He said he was beaten up by his landlord, and he mentioned the name of the landlord. It happened to be one who had contributed 500 pesos for the campaign. So I was looking at \_\_\_\_\_ and he was looking at me, and said, Manny, you put him in jail. Nobody (Laughter)... he knew... That man was sentenced to three months in jail up. Getting hearing much later on; that's another story.

Well, anyway, the fact that Magsaysay went through all of them. In Manila we got 27,000 complaints from tenants that had been holding back, wanting to know \_\_\_\_\_. And I say I only have 4 or 5 lawyers; I can't handle this. Said, call up the Secretary of National Defense, Secretary Kabahuk (sp?). I say, please, sir, you have these judge advocate generals office; I want all of the lawyers except for a skeleton staff to be left in Camp Murphy ??? / \_\_\_\_\_. Tell them to report, all of them to \_\_\_\_\_. I have three platoons of lawyers the next morning, all in uniform. They were given instructions, nobody carries a gun. If you want a bullet proof vest, then you pick a slow book ???, but nothing military except your uniform. We \_\_\_\_\_ them with one of our men, pick up we call them, pick up men. And they went out. Believe it or not, this is a matter of record. 27,000 cases we had; we won all 27,000 cases. We settled all of them. Unbelievable thing. And that is why Taruc, when I was driving him, he no longer had any reasons to fight because the things for which he had been fighting for were now being done.

C: Is Taruc still alive?

M: Yes, he is alive. He is alive.

C: He participated in the government of the country for a time, didn't he?



Side 2 - Interview with Manual Manahan, 27 Pilar St., San Juan, Manila,  
Republic of the Philippines - 24 July 1985 - page 27

M: He is still participating. With Marcos. He would have been freed  
if Magsaysay had not died. If Lansdale had been around when Magsaysay died,  
he would have been on the plane... (Laughter)

C: I hadn't thought of that, but he probably would have.

M: His name would not have been the manifest(??)

C: Well, sir, I have taken up a great deal of your time.

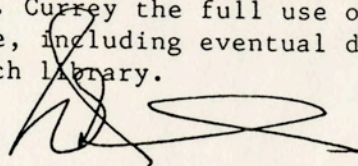
M: My pleasure.

END OF TAPE



In view of the historical value of this interview, I knowingly and voluntarily permit Cecil B. Currey the full use of this information for whatever uses it may have, including eventual deposit of this interview tape in a suitable research library.

Marvel P. MANAHAN



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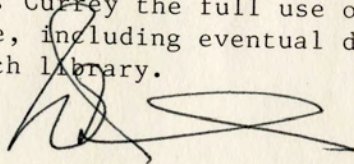
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Date:

July 24 1985